(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) Fixing of minimum support price for spices is not a feasible proposition as prices are mainly determined by market forces of demand and supply. Further, spices, like plantation crops, are basically cash crops. Unlike other agricultural crops which are under minimum support price (MSP) mechanism, spices, in general, are perennial crops with long gestation period and long shelf-life of the product.

Performance on export front

1524. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) how Government is planning to achieve the export target of US$100 billion in 2005-06 with deceleration of export in electronics, leather and textiles front;

(b) how the decline of rupee value against the US dollar affected the export of Indian goods; and

(c) the reasons for which the export of gems and jewellery are not performing according to the expectations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The export target for the financial year 2005-06 is US $ 92 billion. Against this target, the value of exports during the period April — October, 2005 was US $ 52 billion. With the continuing efforts of the Government to promote exports and initiatives taken by exporters themselves, it is expected that total merchandise exports could touch a level of US $ 100 billion during the current financial year despite deceleration of export growth in a few sectors.

(b) Notwithstanding the recent marginal decline of the Indian Rupee against the US Dollar, merchandise exports recorded a growth of 22% during the period April — October, 2005.

(c) The gems and jewellery sector has performed reasonably well recording a growth of 24 per cent during the current financial year (April—August).